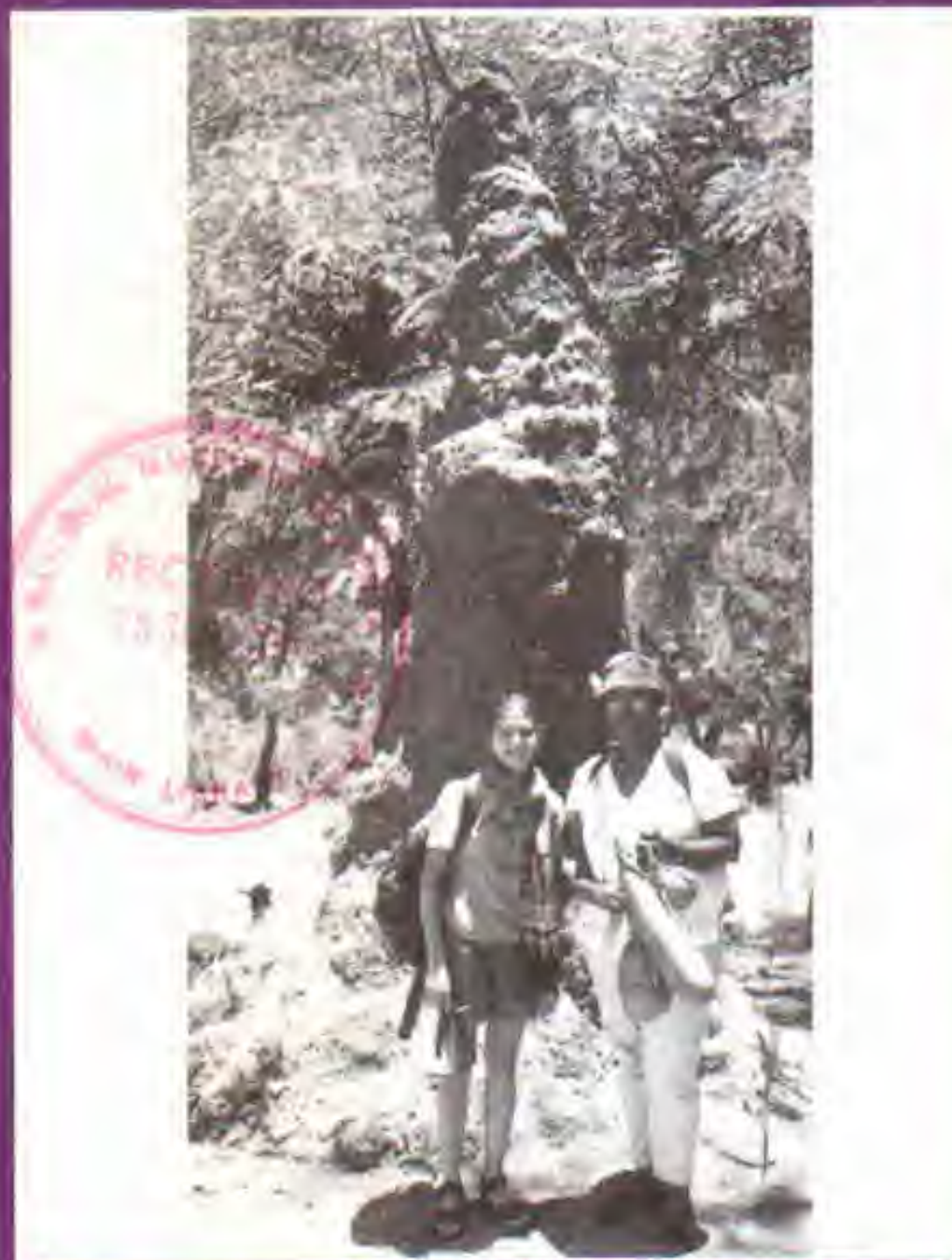


EANHS BULLETIN



Volume 30, no. 2 • December 2000 ISSN 0374-7387

The East Africa Natural History Society

Executive Committees

Nature Kenya officials 2000

Nature Uganda officials 2000

Chairman
Vice-Chairman
Hon. Secretary
Hon. Treasurer
Hon. Journal Editor
Hon. Librarian

Members

Co-opted and Ex-officio

Management Sub-committee

Journal Editorial Sub-committee

Joint Library Sub-committee

Bird Committee of the EANHS Chairman Secretary Editors

Ringed Organiser

Insect Committee Mammal Committee Succulent East Africa

Project Chairpersons/ Convenors

Biodiversity Park

Project

Friends of Nairobi

Arboretum

Friends of City Park

Important Bird Areas

Leon Bennun
Theresa Albon
Fleur Ng'weno

Lorna A. Depew
Deborah Nightingale

Tom Butynski
Benny Bytabier
Barbara Gemmill
John Koske
Nick Oguge
Judith Rudnai

Richard Bagira
Ann Birnie
Marie Dadds
Catherine Ngarachu
Shruti Rajani
Julian Stanning
Steve Turner
Philip Adolwa

Leon Bennun
Benny Bytabier
Tom Butynski
Fleur Ng'weno

Lorna Depew (Editor)
Tom Butynski
Deborah Nightingale

Tom Butynski
Deborah Nightingale

Olivier Naeira
Leon Bennun
Leon Bennun
Colin Jackson
Graeme Backhurst

Judith Rudnai
Nick Oguge
Marie Dadds

Fleur Ng'weno

Ann Birnie

Catherine Ngarachu
Paul Maliku

Hon. Chairman
Hon. Vice-Chairman
Hon. Secretary
Hon. Treasurer
Poverty Secretary

Executive Committee

Sub-committee conservation

BirdLife Uganda

Uganda Wetlands Working Group

Parks Working Group

Merges Working Group

Executive Officer & Editor

Deputy Executive

Officer

Events Officer

Conservation Officer

Paula Kasoma
Robert Kiyo
Deborah Balange
Paul Maliku
Herbert Tushabe

J. Sunny
Norah Malekanga
Derek Pometoy

Alex Muhwezi

T. Otim

J. Tabuti

M. Behananga

Julius Annahwa

Achilles Byaruhanga

Maria Nakabi
Ambrose Mugisha

Life All Around Us

a new series about the
Invertebrates, the Earth's most
biodiverse creatures, that live
near, on – and in – us

Fleur Ng'weno

Box 42271, 00100 GPO, Nairobi



Polyclad

FLATWORMS

Platyhelminthes

simple animals that wriggle
inside us

The first article in this series, Corals and Jellyfish, Builders and Stringers, was published in the *EANHS Bulletin* volume 30 number 1

Parasitic worms are ugly, lazy and disgusting, right? Well, Ralph Buchsbaum, in his wonderful book, *Animals Without Backbones*, looks at parasitic animals from a different point of view:

"Living at the expense of one's neighbour is an old habit among animals," he explains. Almost every animal provides food and lodging for some unwelcome guests – parasites. Most parasites are themselves hosts to still smaller parasites. In fact, there are probably more parasites than hosts!

Most people see parasites as "somehow 'immoral' or at least less 'respectable' than their free-living relatives," writes Buchsbaum. "But since there are more parasites than free-living individuals, a parasitic existence must be considered a normal way of life."

To survive, a parasite must do as little harm as possible to its host, he adds. Who can say that a parasite is "less 'considerate' than a carnivore, which kills its victim outright?"

Flatworms live near us – too near! Many of them live inside our bodies. Flatworms include the blood flukes that cause bilharzia and the tapeworms and hydatid cysts.

Flatworms are not all parasites. Polyclads are some of the most beautiful creatures of the sea, like brightly coloured ribbons. Other flatworms live independent lives in fresh or salt water and in damp places on land.

Flatworms are mainly meat-eaters. The parasitic ones feed on our blood or the food in our intestines. Free-living, or non-parasitic, flatworms feed on very small animals. Some also eat the dead bodies of bigger animals. A few flatworms are fed by tiny algae living inside their tissues.

Flatworms live in damp places. They occur in the sea and seashore, in fresh water, and on the forest floor in moist tropical forests. Parasitic flatworms live inside a host animal.

Flatworms are simple animals. They have flattened bodies with only a few layers of cells. The bodies of most flatworms, however, are arranged in the same way as other, more complex animals. Most flatworms have a head, mouth, and eyes or eyespots. They have a nervous system and a reproductive system. Most of them have a digestive system. Flatworms have no lungs or gills. They use the surface of their bodies to take oxygen from water or damp air.

Flatworms mate and lay eggs. Usually, flatworms are both male and female; they mate and exchange sperm. Some flatworms can fertilise themselves. Many flatworms are also able to reproduce asexually – one flatworm dividing into two or more.

Parasitic flatworms have complex life histories (pages 31-5). Some of them simply hang onto the outside of fishes and turtles. Others must spend part of their lives in one host animal, and another part in another host. Some parasitic flatworms live their lives in three different hosts.

Acknowledgements:

Alex Mackay, D. Davis and Dr. Rees kindly provided information; Maryanne Kamau wrote some of the original text; and Dr. Koen Maes kindly read through this version. Illustrations from *Rainbow* magazine, April 1988, by Nani Croze, Arabon Osiaya-Nyiveque and Roy Mudibu. An earlier version of this series of articles first appeared in *Rainbow* magazine.

References:

- Brusca, R.E. & G.J. Brusca, 1990. *Invertebrates*. Sinauer Associates, Inc., USA.
- Buchanan, R., 1948. *Animals without Backbones*. Penguin Books.
- Richmond, M.D. (ed), 1997. *A Guide to the Seashore of Eastern Africa*. Sida Department for Research Cooperation, SABEC.
- Zim, H.S. and L. Ingle, 1955. *Snaileries*. Golden Press, New York.

Turbellaria

flatworms of land, sea and stream

Free-living flatworms are shaped like leaves; longer than wide and very thin. They usually feed on smaller invertebrates or dead animals. On their underside they have masses of cilia, or tiny hair-like structures. Many flatworms produce slime from their bodies, then glide on the slime by beating the tiny cilia.



The planarian's mouth is on the underside of its body, near the middle. In the mouth is a long feeding tube, used to break off and swallow small pieces of prey.

Scientists have learned much about how animal tissues grow and heal and change by studying the little planaria. If a planarian is cut into two pieces, the pieces will each grow into a new planarian. If a piece of one planarian is fitted onto another, the planarian may grow two heads or other body parts.

Planaria

Planaria are easy to find in streams with clear, clean water. Just lift up stones from the stream and look on the underside. You will see small, flat planaria wriggle across the stone. They are dark brown in colour, and one or two centimetres in length. Their bodies seem to stretch or contract as they move.

Planaria live in dark places, under sticks, stones or among water plants in streams, marshes and lakes. They crawl or swim by contracting their muscles. Planaria lay a few eggs in sac-like capsules. The eggs hatch into small planaria like the adults.

Chemoreceptors—areas near the head that are sensitive to concentrations of chemicals—help planaria to find food.

Land flatworms

You can find land flatworms in damp places or in the rainy season. In the Nairobi area, lift up a stone during the rains; a flatworm may be under the stone. These flatworms are 2 or 3 cm long, dark grey above, pale grey below, and quite narrow.

Marine flatworms or Polyclads

Polyclads are beautiful as they glide over the coral reef or ripple through the water. Most of them are a few centimetres long and brilliantly coloured and patterned. They are thin and delicate and will break apart if you handle them roughly.

Polyclads lay eggs that hatch into tiny larvae. The larvae swim as part of the plankton for a while before developing into adult flatworms. They feed on small sea animals.

Trematoda *Flukes*

Flukes are parasites. They live on or in an animal, called the host, and feed on blood or animal tissues. They have suckers to hang onto their host. Flukes are not the same as leeches, however. Leeches are bigger, easy to see with the naked eye; most flukes are very small.

Schistosoma flukes that cause bilharzia (schistosomiasis) live inside people. Adult flukes cling to the walls of body organs and suck blood. After mating, females lay eggs, which enter the person's bladder or intestine (depending on the species of *Schistosoma*). The eggs leave the human body through the urine or faeces.

When *Schistosoma* eggs are dropped in water, they hatch into tiny larvae called miracidia. The miracidia seek out and enter a freshwater snail. The host snails live in standing water, such as dams, irrigation ditches, rice paddies and slow-moving rivers, usually below 1,800 metres altitude. *Schistosoma* flukes cannot live in land snails or slugs.

Inside the snail, miracidia change into sporocysts, which have the ability to reproduce asexually. The sporocysts produce thousands of larvae called cercaria. The cercaria leave the snail and swim

in water. They must find a new host within a few days or they will die. This time, the host will be a human being.

Schistosoma cercaria are able to go through human skin. Inside the person, they find their way to the blood system. The young flukes may swim around a person's blood system for several years.

The presence of blood flukes feeding inside the body is the disease bilharzia or schistosomiasis. It affects millions of people in tropical areas. There is treatment for the disease, but "prevention is better than cure".

The best prevention is to use latrines – it is people who put bilharzia in water, not snails! Bridges made of logs or "stepping stones" help people to cross standing water. It is best to filter or boil water from a dam or slow-moving stream before drinking it.



Cestoda Tapeworms

Tapeworms are parasitic flatworms, flat but often very long—up to 15 metres! They live in the intestines of animals. Tapeworms feed on food that their host has already digested. They take in digested food through the walls of their bodies—they have no digestive system of their own.

At one end of an adult tapeworm is the head, with suckers that attach to the host's intestine. The long body is made up of pieces called segments. New segments grow from the area near the head.

Older segments contain the reproductive parts, both male and female. Eggs may be fertilised by sperms from the same segment, or from another segment. Two tapeworms of the same kind in a host can fertilise each other. The segment becomes a sac containing thousands of eggs. The tapeworm larvae must now develop in a different kind of host.

Beef Tapeworm is the commonest tapeworm in the world. A person who has a tapeworm passes segments like small whitish postage stamps in his stool, or faeces. If the faeces are left in the open, grazing cattle may swallow segments filled with eggs. The eggs hatch into larvae that form

small cysts called bladderworms in the host animal's muscles.



Cooking meat thoroughly by roasting, frying or boiling kills bladderworms by high temperatures. But when a person eats raw or partly cooked infected meat, the bladders open and release tapeworm heads. A beef tapeworm may live for more than ten years! Medicines are available to kill tapeworms, and using latrines stops the cycle.

Hydatid cyst or Dog tapeworm is rare, but occurs in northern Kenya where people keep livestock and dogs. The adults are very small, 2 to 5 mm long. They live in the intestines of dogs and jackals, who get them from eating the meat of infected cattle or sheep. Tapeworm segments full of eggs are passed in the faeces.

Hydatid cyst tapeworm larvae have many possible hosts, including people, domestic mammals and wild animals. The larvae form cysts, usually in organs such as the liver or lungs. Small at first, the cysts can become very large.

Dogs may be treated to kill the adult tapeworm, or fed only on cooked meat. Hydatid cysts in people can be treated with medicines or surgery.

Meet the staff at the Nature Kenya office

Ann Gathitu
*Administration
Volunteer*

Ann handles office filing and stationery, routine correspondence, sorts records for billing and assists with accounts.



Anthony Kiragu
*Conservation
Programme Officer*
Dan Omolo
*Conservation
Programme Officer*

Kiragu and Dan work for the very important Bird Areas programme, assisting the Programme Manager and the Executive Director to work with community environmental groups, Government officials and other NGOs for biodiversity conservation.



Catherine Ngarachu
*Membership Services
Manager*

Catherine has been working for Nature Kenya since 1996, coordinating membership activities and programmes. She also manages the database and web site, and edits the newsletter *Nature Net*.



Daniel Akach
Accountant

Akach manages the Nature Kenya books of accounts and is in charge of financial accounting and financial reporting for projects and committees.



Daniel Karurima
*Tropical Biology
Association,
Assistant
Project Officer*

Daniel coordinates the follow-up support programme for TBA as well as assists in the day-to-day running of the TBA courses and office.



L. Turkaña

MEMBERS FIELD TRIP TO KOOBI FORA 18-24 APRIL 2000

Jan Beye



For me, the trip 'proper' started as we took the short-cut from the Jere road to Kapenguria. We stopped at a Police post to ascertain the way, and spotted a Blue Flycatcher among some flame trees. We then descended the majestic Marich pass through the Cherangani Hills.

Marich Pass Field Studies Centre, where we were to spend the night, is at the bottom of the escarpment, in an area studded with trees, bordering a wide river bed which trickled water thinly down off the mountain. Simple bandas dotted the area; university students worked quietly on benches under the trees. A giant Kingfisher flew back and forth along the river bank and a brief bird-walk revealed Ruppell's Long-tailed Starling, the Double-throated Barbet, and the flashy Gonolek.

Wednesday set the standard of our early-morning wake-up calls, never later than 6:00 a.m. A quick scramble for breakfast, and into 4-wheel drives

for the Wei Wei valley, a half hour away. Luscious mango trees harboured colonies of chattering Violet-backed Starlings. We walked a hot dusty trail meandering upwards alongside a rumbling stream. I caught sight of the white phase of the Paradise Flycatcher flitting ghost-like through the bushes. Up and up... hotter and hotter. A small rapid and refreshing pool were too tempting and soon most of us were enjoying the cool water. We ambled back, gazing up in awe at the rainbow, ringing the sun in a perfect circle: sure sign of rain.

After a late lunch, Fleur Ng'weno arrived, bringing the news that there was only one convoy to Lodwar the following morning – at 6:00 a.m. Our bird list grew mightily with Fleur around, and I was mildly reproached for not recording each bird at every location. As I remembered, Fleur diligently recorded the Common Bithul for Marich and Wei Wei.

On an evening walk, we learned about the local medicinal use of various plants.

The next day we had our bags packed ready for a 4/30 a.m. start, quick breakfast, and on the road. There was a lengthy stop at the barrier, then a ponderous start as the convoy formed and motored on. The broken tarmac forced us onto the corrugated dirt track alongside. Our heads nodded away the kilometres to Lodwar as the landscape became more and more barren, more moon-scape-like, and ever hotter. There were luke-warm sodas in the noisy patio of a local "dive". Then we met up with the Jade Sea bus which led us to a discreet palm-lined compound where we were served soup and an excellent buffet lunch under the shade.

At Kalokol curious children crowded close, their goats and camels in the background, as we prepared to embark on two open boats with enormous outboard engines. We exclaimed at our first sightings of water-birds and listed many, as our bags were enclosed in waterproof canvas and the paraphernalia of camping was loaded on.

There was a short trip to the Fishing Lodge to purchase tickets for Central Island, dodging fish nets on the way. Our boat snarled its engine. Then we were off again the bow rising above the little waves and crashing down,

sending up welcome spray to cool us. There was silence as we savoured the hour-long journey, watching the two humps of Central Island approach, wondering where the craters were. We lugged our luggage up the sandy beach, and then, hastily changed and headed back to the water, strange, soapy, and almost slimy. Wavelets crashed on us, we painfully stubbed toes on the pebbles, but it was oh so refreshing! We heard warning shouts from the shore to watch out for crocodiles, but none appeared to spoil our fun.



By the time we had dried, collected our mattresses and staked our claims to patches of sand on the beach, the sun was dipping in the west in a

glorious display of oranges, greys and blues. We lay on our backs, watching the stars appear and listening to Fleur as she pointed out Orion's belt, the dog star, the southern cross. Satellites darted busily across the sky, and the occasional meteorite distracted us. Then the full moon rose in the east, the stars faded, and supper was ready.

It was another early start in the boats in a small beach rowed over by rocks. An Egyptian Vulture soared above, as we climbed up a tiny scree to the rim of the first crater.

There, nestled below us, was a small lake encircled by a thick rim of pink: the experts estimated 5,000 flamingos. We paused for breath and photographs, then slid down onto the crater floor, and up the other side, our party spreading out. There was a stop near the highest peak to marvel at the sulphurous steam-jets. We were hurried forward along the rough path, painfully detained by wait-a-bit thorns, with warnings that it would soon get too hot for comfort. Another crater came into view, deep green and quiet; no flamingos here but two enormous crocodiles lurked death-like in the dark waters. Breeding herons and egrets were glimpsed in the bushes between water and cliff wall. It really was getting hot now, and water bottles were flapping empty at our sides. The long plunge down to the lake-level seemed to go on forever. The sun baked down.

One by one we made the campsite and rushed for the meager shade of the only two bushes in the area. The lake was irresistible, and the dip was a welcome respite, but very soon we were sweating hot again as we waited for lunch before embarking yet again, this time for a 5 hour boat ride over to Koobi Fora. As we beached at 6.00 p.m., crocodiles slid silently off the sand into the lake. Pompous little Crested Larks strutted among the grassy tufts as a beautiful sunset reflected on the clouds. Then night engulfed us. We had another excellent meal, wine and sound sleep atop the bed.



another early start, and we piled into landrovers for the long bumpy journey southwards to the petrified forest at Allia Bay. Burchell's and Grevy's Zebra, elegant-necked Gerenuk, stately Oryx, and numerous Dik-Dik were passed. And, of course, there was a wealth of new birds. We eagerly scanned the dry river beds, lined with green fig trees and acacias, and were rewarded by several 'life birds' as the migrants had not yet passed northwards, and the Somali species were, of course, resident.

We climbed a gentle rise towards a distinctive rocky outcrop in the barren landscape, to the strange spectacle of fallen trees, cut up into regular chunks as if by giant saws – except that the logs were stone, retaining for millions of years the exact grain of the original wood, and the colouring of numerous minerals. The smooth breaks were due to earth movements, we were told, which cracked and broke the fossilised trunks. In the rocks above we found more fossils: great roots or vines entwined, more partly exposed trunks, stones with fascinating hues.



Then it was time to drive the short distance to the Knobi Fora Museum. We could not leave this out. Brilliant Carmine Be-eaters escorted us part of the way.

The single-roomed museum, delightfully designed, explained everything so simply. And

We withdrew to a sand river for refreshments. The birds were quiet in the midday hush. Another rough journey, eastwards this time, led us to a low stone-walled building nestling in a depression, its iron roof gleaming incongruously in the barren surrounds. We shuffled gratefully into the shade while our guide explained the amazingly complete, *in situ*, fossil elephant, which had roamed these plains two million years ago. Another short ride revealed two similar constructions, visible only from a few metres away in the undulating terrain. An enormous tortoise, and easily recognisable crocodile curled inwards along its tail. As we left the site, protruding from an insignificant mound near the cars, were a hippo's teeth uncovered only last year.

We got back to camp for lunch at 3:00 p.m., and, as we approached, the lake sparkled diamonds in the sunlight before us, turning into soft jade in the bay, stretching beyond the horizon towards the Omo Delta.

the seating was superb—on a steep cliff overlooking the lake. A herd of Topi and a single Grevy's Zebra grazed on the green shore far below. A Eurasian Nightjar flapped to rest below us. I must come again. I resolved, as there had been no time to explore the hominid fossil sites at Karari and Hader. Thunderstorms raged to the north and east, while the sun struggled with grey cohorts as it dipped towards the west.

The final surprise of the safari came after a smooth boat journey back to Kalokai the following day. Three enormous grey elephants loomed out of the bush just a few yards from the road in the reserve north of Marich. That evening, our after-dinner reminiscence at the Field Studies Centre was interrupted as the heavens opened, and we raced for our bandas. The stream bed that separated us from the faster black flash-flooded in the night, and on Monday we left a community thankful for the respite after many months of drought.

SHORT COMMUNICATIONS

AN EXCEPTIONAL ROOST OF CATTLE EGRETS IN KAMPALA



Cattle egrets by Sami Carver

William Banage, Dept. of Zoology &
Derek Pomeroy, Institute of
Environment & Natural Resources
*Makerepe University,
Box 702 Kampala*

A Makerepe University student, Adramah Ben Butile, counted Cattle Egrets *Bubulcus ibis* as they came into a Kampala roost, and again as they left, on 14 occasions between 25 October and 15 December 2000. The roost is situated at the Kabaka's Lake, an artificial one of some 5 ha in Mengo, south-western Kampala. The birds roost on shrubby vegetation on four small islands in the lake. They start leaving the roost as early as 05:50; by 1800 they are beginning to return. The majority fly to areas between north and east from the roost.

The egrets arrive and depart in flocks of around 50 birds, but ranging from 7 to 68. All individuals in the smaller flocks were counted—larger flocks had to be estimated, especially when two or more flocks arrived or left together. Overall estimates ranged from 1024 to 4669, with a mean of

4349. There was no trend in numbers during the 8-week period of observations, however. Cartswell (1986) mentions that the species is most common in the Kampala area between September and February, a period which includes that of Butile's study.

Although a roost of nearly 5000 birds is impressive, and probably a record for East Africa, *Birds of Africa* (Brown *et al.* 1982) record up to 10,000, and Pete Leonard (pers. comm., 08 March 2001) reports about 13,000 on the Kafue Flats of Zambia.

This roosting site has been known for some years, but we know of no previous estimate of numbers.

References

- Brown, LH, EK Urban and K. Newman, 1982 *The Birds of Africa*, Vol. 1. Academic Press, London and New York.
- Cartswell, M. 1986. *The birds of the Kampala area*. Ornithological Subcommittee of the EANHIS, Nairobi.

URBAN WILDLIFE



Nairobi Garden Natural History Observations

The Records of Arturo Foresti

Edited by L. E. Newton

Dept of Biology, Kenyatta University, P.O. Box 10511, Nairobi

The late Arturo Foresti (1950–1999) came to live in Kenya after retirement from his profession as a lawyer in his native Italy. He lived in Nairobi's Mathaiga suburb for about ten years and developed his property into a botanical garden, specialising in trees, succulent plants, bromeliads and orchids. He kept meticulous records for each plant, especially indigenous Kenyan species that he had collected during his many field excursions. During his terminal illness he asked me to take his plants after his death, and he gave me his card file database. This database includes records of animals seen in the garden, and it seems worthwhile placing on record what this enthusiastic natural history observer had seen.

The database includes observations made since January 1988. Each record includes some or all of the following: family, scientific name, vernacular name, reference to literary text for

identification, date of first observation, notes. Most observations were made by Arturo, but some were first made (obs.) or were confirmed (conf.) by visitors, as indicated in square brackets after the date, and one captured specimen was later identified (id.) by someone else. The last entry in the card file was made in May 1997, which was less than a year before Arturo became aware of his illness and started on a course of medical treatment.



Pind Cuckoo

BUTTERFLIES

Lycaenidae

- *Aspidochelys ethanensis* Ergon Green Cupid Butterfly (Larsen, 1991). 13 Apr. 1995.

Nymphalidae

- *Aizana aestiva aestiva* Waudsloti, 1 Feb. 1997. Female.
- *Amantia maris despectuosa* Friar (Larsen, 1991). 19 Feb. 1996.
- *Boyeria infixa* Common Bush Broom 27 Jan. 1997.
- *Charaxes thalassius* *subangatus* White-Bellied Charaxes (Larsen, 1991). 9 Dec. 1995. Male.
- *Charaxes vindex* Green-Veined Charaxes 16 Apr. 1997. Male.
- *Charaxes (Itanion) nimbialis* Blue-Spotted Charaxes 13 Mar. 1995. Female.
- *Charaxes ethaliae* *Aitakia* (Larsen, 1991). 30 May 1995 (det. M. Roberts).
- *Eurybia dryas axolotla* Golden Piper 10 Apr. 1995.
- *Graphis pygmaea* African Blue Tiger 19 Mar. 1995.

Papilionoidea

- *Papilio nathus nathus* Noble Swallowtail (Larsen, 1991). 19 Feb. 1996.
- *Papilio rex rex* Regal Swallowtail 3 June 1995.

Pieridae

- *Belenus cyana cyana* African Caper White; Common Caper White 15 July 1997. Male.
- *Belenus doris doris* False Dotted-Border (Larsen, 1991). 14 Apr. 1995.
- *Belenus archiaea archiaea* Forest Caper White (Larsen, 1991). 22 Nov. 1995.
- *Mylothris rufipes rufipes* Ruppell's Dotted-Border 1 June 1995. Female.

OTHER INSECTS

Apidae

- *Apis mellifica mellifica* (L.) 5 Aug. 1988.

REPTILES

Chamaeleonidae

- *Chamaeleo marmoratus* Jackson's Three-Horned Chameleon 3 Apr. 1988.

Gekkonidae

- *Hemidactylus mabuya* Common House Gecko 29 Sept. 1992.

Scincidae

- *Amblystoma* *virgatum* Striped Skink (Hedgen, 1985). 29 Sept. 1992.

BIRDS

Accipitridae

- *Accipiter melanoleucus* (L.) Great Sparrowhawk (Williams & Arlott, 1980; Lewis & Pomeroy, 1989). 12 Feb. 1995. Immature.
- *Buteo bates* Common Buzzard (Lewis & Pomeroy, 1989); Steppe Buzzard (Williams & Arlott, 1980); 14 Jan. 1992 (obs. L. Biddau). Winter visitor.
- *Nyctalus nyctalus* Black Cat 7 Jan. 1988 (obs. L. Biddau, Jan. 1992).
- *Polyborus melanopus* Harrier Hawk (Lewis & Pomeroy, 1989; Williams & Arlott, 1980); Gymnagrus (Williams & Arlott, 1980). 14 Jan. 1992 (obs. L. Biddau).
- *Leucophaea leucophaea* Boreyal 22 Jan. 1995.

Apodidae

- *Apus affinis* Little Swift 15 Jan. 1992 (obs. L. Biddau).

Ardeidae

- *Ardea melanocephala* Black-headed Heron 10 Sept. 1996. Standing in Marham River.

Bucerotidae

- *Bucconas abyssinicus* Silvery-cheeked Hornbill 13 Jan. 1988.

Caprimulgidae

- *Lycoteles lacrymans* (L.) T. *lacrymans* Spotted-Barbed Night Hawk (Lewis & Pomeroy, 1989; Williams & Arlott, 1980). 20 Dec. 1991.
- *Pogonocherus fuscus* (L.) Moustached Green Tinkerbird 10 Jan. 1995.

Coliidae

- *Cubus corax*: Speckled Munbird: 24 Jan. 1988 (cont. L. Biddau, Jan. 1992; cont. L. Biddau, A. Desautels & A. Pollard, Jan. 1997). On bird feeder.

Columbidae

- *Streptopelia semitorquata*: Red-eyed Dove: 10 Jan. 1988 (cont. L. Biddau, Jan. 1992). On bird feeder.

- *Streptopelia senegalensis*: Laughing Dove: 14 Jan. 1992 (obs. L. Biddau). On bird feeder.

Coryvidae

- *Corypha alba*: Pied Crow: 24 Jan. 1988 (cont. L. Biddau).

Cuculidae

- *Cuculus vittatus*: Red-chested Cuckoo: 14 Jan. 1992 (obs. L. Biddau).

Estrildidae

- *Lagonosticta rubricauda biddulami*: Mitu: 45 February–4 May 1997.

- *Lagonosticta senegalensis*: Red-billed Firefinch: 24 Jan. 1988 (cont. L. Biddau, Jan. 1992; cont. L. Biddau, A. Desautels & A. Pollard, Jan. 1997). On bird feeder.

- *Loudonella cucullata*: Bronze Mannikin: 16 Jan. 1988 (cont. L. Biddau, Jan. 1992; cont. L. Biddau, A. Desautels & A. Pollard, Jan. 1997). On bird feeder.

Falconidae

- *Falco peregrinus*: Peregrine Falcon: 11 Mar. 1993.

Fringillidae

- *Scoptes scrofa*: Striped Seed-eater: 24 Jan. 1992 (obs. L. Biddau; cont. L. Biddau, Jan. 1992; cont. L. Biddau, A. Desautels & A. Pollard, Jan. 1997). On bird feeder.

Hirundinidae

- *Hirundo albicollis*: Striped Swallow: 1 Mar. 1992 (obs. L. Biddau).

Laniidae

- *Lanius collaris hameratus*: Common Fiscal Shrike (Lewis & Pomroy, 1989; Williams & Arlott, 1980): 15 Jan. 1992 (obs. L. Biddau).

Meropidae

- *Merops viridis*: Cinnamon-chested Bee-eater: 1 Mar. 1992 (obs. L. Biddau).

Motacillidae

- *Motacilla alba*: African Pied Wagtail: 20 Feb. 1992.

Muscicapidae

- *Muscivora hirsuta* (syn. *Dupprina*) (obs.): White-eyed Star Flycatcher (Lewis & Pomroy, 1989; Williams & Arlott, 1980): 6 Sept. 1995. With a small lizard in its beak.

- [Zimmerman *et al.* (1996) call the White-eyed Star Flycatcher *Muscivora* (obs.), stating that it was formerly considered to be conspecific with *M. hirsuta* L.F.S.]

- *Terophorus*: Paradise Flycatcher: 20 Sept. 1989.

Nectarinidae

- *Nectarinia nana*: Amethyst Sunbird: 11 Dec. 1991 (cont. L. Biddau, Jan. 1992).

- *Nectarinia olivacea*: Bronze Sunbird: 1 Mar. 1992 (obs. L. Biddau). Nesting and feeding young in neighbouring garden.

- *Nectarinia parva*: Northern Double-collared Sunbird (Zimmerman *et al.*, 1996): 24 Jan. 1997 (obs. L. Biddau, A. Desautels & A. Pollard).

- *Nectarinia*: Variable Sunbird: 2 Dec. 1991 (cont. L. Biddau, Jan. 1992; cont. L. Biddau, A. Desautels & A. Pollard, Jan. 1997).

- *Nectarinia*: Variable: Green-headed Sunbird: 4 Dec. 1991.

Paridae

- *Parus olivaceus*: White-breasted Tit (Williams & Arlott, 1980; White-bellied Tit) (Lewis & Pomroy, 1989): 28 Oct. 1989.

Ploceidae

- *Ploceus*: Grobeak Weaver: 24 Jan. 1989 (cont. L. Biddau, Jan. 1992). On bird feeder.

- *Ploceus*: Grey-headed Sparrow: 15 Jan. 1992 (obs. L. Biddau). On bird feeder.

- *Ploceus*: Red-bellied Weaver: 5 Jan. 1992 (cont. L. Biddau, Jan. 1992). On bird feeder.

• *Ploceus? inullatus*: Black-headed Weaver
5 Jan. 1992. On bird feeder.

• *Ploceus wantlupi*: Hahub's Golden Weaver
5 Jan. 1992 (conf. L. Biddau, A. Desanctis
& A. Polluti, Jan. 1997). On bird feeder.

Pyronotidae

• *Pyronotus bartholomaei*: Black-capped Bulbul
(Guggisberg, 1986). Common Bulbul
(Guggisberg, 1986; Lewis & Pomeroy,
1989). Yellow-vented Bulbul (Williams &
Arlott, 1980). 15 Dec. 1991 (conf. L.
Biddau, Jan. 1992; conf. L. Biddau, A.
Desanctis & A. Polluti, Jan. 1997).

Scopidae

• *Scopelia umbellata*: Hamerkops. 14 Jan. 1992
(obs. L. Biddau).

Sylviidae

• *Camaroptera brachyura*: Grey-backed
Camaroptera. 15 Jan. 1992 (obs. L. Biddau;
conf. L. Biddau, A. Desanctis & A. Polluti,
Jan. 1997). [In Williams & Arlott (1980)
C. brachyura is called Green-backed
Camaroptera, and the Grey-backed
Camaroptera is called *C. brachydata* (LEN).
[Zimmerman *et al* lump the two as
C. brachyura].

Threskiornithidae

• *Bucconia lagodactylus* (syn. *Hagadaethia*
lagodactylus): Hadada (Guggisberg, 1988;
Lewis & Pomeroy, 1989). Hadada Ibis
(Williams & Arlott, 1980). 10 Jan. 1988
(conf. L. Biddau, Jan. 1992).

Turdidae

• *Corypha hageni*: White-browed Robin
Chat (Williams & Arlott, 1980) (Lewis &
Pomeroy, 1989). 18 Mar. 1990 (conf. L.
Biddau, Jan. 1992). On bird feeder.
[Actually Ruppell's Robin-Chat *Corypha*
ultrata F. Ngweni].

• *Turdus abyssinicus* (syn. *Turdus olivaceus*):
Northern Olive Thrush (Lewis & Pomeroy,
1989). Olive Thrush (Guggisberg, 1986;
Williams & Arlott, 1980). 24 Jan. 1988
(conf. L. Biddau, Jan. 1992; conf. L.
Biddau, A. Desanctis & A. Polluti, Jan.
1997). On bird feeder.

Upupidae

• *Upupa epops*: European Hoopoe,
Palearctic Race. 1988.

Zosteropidae

• *Zosterops palliatus kikuyuensis*: Kikuyu
White-eye (Williams & Arlott, 1980).
Montane White-eye (Lewis & Pomeroy,
1989). 27 Oct. 1989.

MAMMALS

Cercopithecidae

• *Cercopithecus mitis kellyi* (?): Sykes Monkeys.
31 Mar. 1992. An occasional visitor.

Sciuridae

• *Paraxerus nebrucei*: Huet (Bush) Squirrel.
(Halternorik & Diller, 1980). 11 Dec. 1991.
On bird feeder.

Soricidae

• Shrew. 27 Feb. 1992. Nesting on clump
of *Billbergia nutans* (epiphytic on *Millettia*
luna).

Viverridae

• *Herpestes sanguineus*: Black-tipped
Mongoose; Slender Mongoose. 28 Apr.
1992. Dark-tipped tail seen clearly.
An unidentified mongoose was seen leaving
(the terrace of the lower garden) in late 1987
or early 1988.

References

- Guggisberg, C.A.W. (1986–1988) *East African
Birds*. Volumes 1 (Edn. 2, 1988) & 2 (Edn. 1,
1986). Mount Kenya Sundries, Nairobi.
- Halternorik, T. & H. Diller. (1980) *Mammals
of Africa, Including Madagascar*. Collins,
London.
- Hodges, S.G. (1983) *Reptiles and Amphibians
of East Africa*. Kenya Literature Bureau,
Nairobi.
- Larsen, T.B. (1991) *The Butterflies of Kenya*.
Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- Lewis, S. & D. Pomeroy. (1989) *A Bird Atlas
of Kenya*. Balkema, Rotterdam & Brookfield.
- Williams, J.G. & Arlott, N. (1980) *A Field
Guide to the Birds of East Africa*. Collins,
London.
- Zimmerman, D.A., D.A. Turner & D.J.
Pearson. (1990) *Birds of Kenya and Northern
Tanzania*. Ruedi Friedman, Halfway House
(RSA).

HARVESTING TERMITES AND ANTS

Jo Darlington

University Museum of Zoology
Downing Street
Cambridge CB2 3EJ, UK

I was very interested to read the two articles in *EANHIS Bulletin* 29(1&2) pp.14-15, "Of termites and associated plants" by Dee Raymer and "Hard times for termites" by Ian Gordon.

Termite alates usually fly during wet seasons, but since they are not gifted with prophecy (despite their high reputation as weather forecasters), they do not know in advance if the rains are going to fail. When I was working on *Macrotermes* in Kajiado, the "normal" pattern was for alates to fly in the November rains, after seven months development inside the nest. If the November rains were poor (as they often are) the mature alates remained in the nest, losing some weight but otherwise healthy, until the next rains in April. If these rains were good, the alates could swarm successfully then. However, if the April rains also failed, no flights occurred, but the alates disappeared from the nests shortly afterwards.

I had assumed that the old brood were probably eaten by their sterile nest-mates (as normally happens when steriles die in the nest).

This seems the most economical way to dispose of them, but termite digestion is adapted to plant food, and a whole brood of alates might be too much for them to cope with. Dee Raymer's observation of alates emerging in June does indeed suggest that the doomed alates are simply ejected from the nest to make room for the next generation. This is more or less what Ian Gordon suggested, but the weight loss labels indicate that the alates, once mature, are not fed by the workers, however long they remain in the nest. The intriguing question is, how is the communal decision made that enough is enough and the old brood has to go?

Dee seems to be confusing harvesting ants with harvesting termites (and no, they are not the same thing!). It is the ant, *Messor vephalotes* (Emery), that makes the conspicuous oval patches of bare soil up to 10 m across in grassland that Dee described. The ants are large, reddish with a satin sheen, and can often be seen in daylight passing to and fro on their bare pathways, bringing in grass seeds to the nests. The husks are later thrown out forming piles of chaff in the middle of the bare patch, where there are often piles of small stones and soil.

Dee found *Myrmecocystus mexicanus* C. Jeffrey (Cucurbitaceae) growing in the bald patches. I had previously found this plant at Ilkek near Gilgil, also growing on nests of *M. vephalotes*.

("A plant taking advantage of ants". *EANH5 Bulletin*, Sept./Oct., 1984, p. 104). Maybe this is a good time to find out what its distribution in Kenya really is? If you find it, please send details to Dee or to me. It is a very recognisable plant, as described in Dee's article, the leaves and stems have the texture of sandpaper.

There is a related ant species *Maïor galla* Mayr which behaves in a similar way. The ants are smaller and shiny black. The bald patches around their nests are smaller and irregular in shape, but they also have conspicuous bare pathways leading off. The plant *Myrmecocycas mossambicus* has not been recorded from their nests as far as I know, but any information about its distribution will be gratefully received.

M. galla and *M. cephalotes* do not seem to occur at "the same" sites.



Myrmecocycas thersites

Myrmecocycas thersites (Blood & Green Wild Plant)

Harvesting termites come in two different varieties. The snouted harvester termites *Trinervitermes* spp. are only a few mm long, and their numerous soldiers have dark red and black globular heads with a long pointed "nose" at the front from which they squirt a sticky fluid smelling of turpentine. They live in small earth mounds and are widespread in Kenya.

The other harvester, *Hodotermes mossambicus* Hagen, is a very unusual termite. It forages boldly in the open by day or night, cutting up the stems and leaves of grass to carry back to the nest. The workers are large, about 1 cm long and thick-bodied, with glossy dark head and thorax and a pale abdomen. The most unusual feature, unique to this family (Hodotermitidae) is that the workers have functional eyes. (The soldiers also have eyes, but that is not quite so unusual). The soldiers are even larger than the workers, with red-brown heads and black serrated jaws. They usually stand guard at the entrances to the foraging holes.

Hodotermes nests are large, but they spread over a considerable area, and there is no mound to be seen. The termites betray their presence by making conical piles of loose soil pellets about 15–25 cm across and 10–15 cm high with a pipe up the middle built of cemented soil pellets. The termite workers climb up inside the pipe to push more pellets out the top. If you find an active conical pile with moist soil at the tip (as in the photo on p. 248 of C. & T. Stuart, 1994), you can often watch the fresh pellets being pushed out, and if you quickly knock the pile over you can catch the termite workers inside. Sometimes they pile cut pieces of grass around the entrance hole.

This is predominantly a species of southern Africa. Kenya is right on the northern edge of its distribution. It is abundant in Kajiado, and south from there to the Tanzanian border, and also in Amboseli. I believe it also occurs around Magadi, and I have found them on Mount Suswa, and near Olkaria just outside Hell's Gate N.P. I would be interested to know of any other localities.

You may not want to waste your shillings sending letters to me in England! Dee has very kindly agreed to act as intermediary, at PO Box 2356, Machakos, Kenya.

Reference

Stuart, C. & T. Stuart. 1994. *A field guide to the tracks and signs of Southern and East African wildlife*. Southern Book Publishers (Pty) Ltd., Cape Town.

Editor's note:

In *Upland Kenya Wild Flowers*, by A.D.Q. Agnew and S. Agnew (1994, EANHS), *Myrmecoutycus messurus* is noted (page 91) as "Endemic, growing on the edges of bare areas around harvester ant nests in grassland, common around Isinya on the Kajiado Road. 1600-1900m, Central Rift Valley, Kajiado."

Meet the staff, continued

Elizabeth Maloba

Administration & Development Manager

Maloba coordinates administration activities and is a point of contact for committees and projects.



Elizabeth Nyambura

Front Office Assistant

Liz looks after front office operations including the taking of subscriptions and sales, maintaining stock, and acts as a point of communication for other staff.



Fanshaline Jebet

Office Assistant

Fan is responsible for maintaining the office, despatch, photocopying, and assisting in the preparation for committee meetings.



continuation page 20

GRASSES AND SEDGES IN KENYA



Towards the production of new keys to the grasses (Poaceae) and sedges (Cyperaceae) of Central Kenya, we have come across some interesting inter- and intra-national range extensions.

Specimens are deposited at the Nairobi (EAAH) Herbarium.

Nomenclature follows Clayton et al (1982) and Haines & Lye (1983) and all determinations have been checked by comparison with named material in the Kew herbarium (K).

Illustration *Eleocharis marginalis*
from *The Sedges and Rushes of East Africa*

POACEAE

Isachne munitiana Kunth

Mt Kenya National Park, Chogoria track, Lake Rumuk edges, 2011 m., coll. Woolfer, D Swain, v.n., 27.1.1997.

As far as we know this grass has not yet been recorded for Mt Kenya.

Megastachya macranata (Poir.) Beauv.

Existing records of this broad-leaved annual come from the Coast. P.S. Mavinde 26 (18.5.94) is from Machakos, a considerable range extension.

Rhynchospora latifolia W.D Clayton

Type seen: Greenway & Kaniri 25-454 (Clayton & Renvoize, 1982).

This species is known from Uganda and Tanzania. After the excellent rains of May 1997 one tussock of the plant was found (by ADQA) at

Galana Ranch, Coast Province in a wet sump on black cotton soil. The habitat was alongside a cut line and track, and so was possibly disturbed.

CYPERACEAE

Rhynchospora bracteata Roem. & Schult. (*R. rugosa* (Vahl) Gale)

Mt. Kenya National Park, Chogoria track, Lake Rumuk edges, 2011 m., coll. Woolfer, D Swain & S. Mathai, 25.01.1997, no. LMC211. The lake is surrounded by wet montane forest, but the species is present in the wet fen, sometimes at over 30% cover. The genus *Rhynchospora* is known from Kenya Coast, but not inland, and this species is unrecorded from Kenya in Haines & Lye 1983.

Scleria vacuola Poit.

A large bushy tufted sedge 1 m tall with ribbed leaves along a triangular stem, and with conspicuously decurrent leaf bases, this plant was sterile when collected at Kalesema, Busia District, by ADQA and Jane Ruto (KETRI), 25.5.1997. It grew at the edge of streamside thickets. Known from Uganda and the East Province this appears to be the first record from inland Kenya.

ADQ Agnew

qda@machynalleth.fsnet.co.uk,
The Herbarium, Institute of
Biology, University of Wales
Aberystwyth, SY23 5DA U.K.

Mathew Wooller

wooller@gl.cw.edu,
Carnegie Inst. Geophysical Lab.,
4251 Broad Branch Rd. NW,
Washington DC 20015, USA.

References

Clayton, WD & SA Renvoize, 1982, Gramineae (Part 3) in *The Flora of Tropical East Africa* (FTEA), edited by RM Polhill (1972-1999), Crown Agents, London.

Haines, RW and KA Lye, 1985, *The Sedges and Rushes of East Africa: A flora of the families Juncaceae and Cyperaceae in East Africa with a particular reference to Uganda*, East Africa Natural History Society, Nairobi, pp 303.

Meet the staff, continued

Lawrence Maina

*Project
Biologist
Assistant
Nairobi
Kenya
People's
Office*



Lawrence is responsible for coordinating TBA activities in Africa, in particular coordinating and organising TBA field courses, arranging travel and field logistics, as well as the day to day running of the TBA Nairobi office and its alumni programme.

Lillian Igweta

*Friends of Nairobi
Arboretum
Environmental
Office*



Lillian organises FONA events, designs the newsletter *Tu Ni Ni*, liaises with Arboretum staff and prepares and mounts the Arboretum tree labels.

PLANTS FROM MT. KENYA, CHOGORIA TRACK

An extensive collection of plants has been built up during several visits to the wetlands of the Chogoria Track during research into the vegetation history of Mt Kenya. The evidence for past climatic change is important to help our appreciation of likely changes in our own times, and clues are to be found in past lake sediments which span the last hundred thousand years on the mountain. These clues consist of fossil pollen and plant fragments which have to be identified, first by comparison with species growing locally, thus the collections.

Published biogeography of Kenya is mainly found in Agnew & Agnew (1994), known as *UKWF*. This note (appendix) lists species collected by Swain & Wooller which have not been recorded for the HK (Highlands Mt Kenya) area in *UKWF*. Of course no lists are exhaustive, and these records concentrate on wetland plants. Much recent work has been done on the Chogoria Track forests but woody plants are not listed in this note.

The lakes under examination are Sacred Lake, Nkuanga, Rumuk'u, Ruriindu.

Most of these species are common and the record simply fills in a gap, but *Laurobergia nitens* was previously recorded only in Kirale region and the specimens here double our Kenya specimens. Other species are seldom collected because water plants are often ignored. These include *Ottelia alvifolia* and the two bladderworts, *Utricularia australis* and *U. reflexa*.

David Swain

Stephen Mathai

Palaeobotany, National Museums of Kenya, Box 45166, Nairobi.

Andrew Agnew

Biology Inst., University of Wales Aberystwyth, SY23 3DA, U.K.

e-mail: apda@machynlleth.biol.uw.ac

Reference

Agnew, ADQ and Shirley Agnew. 1994 *Upland Kenya Wild Flowers-A flora of the herbaceous flowering plants and ferns*, Second completely revised Edition. EAFHS, Nairobi pp 373 x 175 plates.

Appendix: New and Interesting Records of Plants from Mt Kenya, Chugoria Track

The names are followed by altitude, locality, date of collection and collection number. Nomenclature follows Agnew & Agnew (1994).

- Arisaema salicifolia* 1820m Nkunga 22.01.96 25/96
Blechnum australe 1820m Nkunga 02.09.95 3/2
Camassia latifolia 1820m Nkunga 22.01.96 25/96
Cratogeomys pteridifolium 1820m Nkunga 01.09.95 2/95
Crotalaria Pachyphora 1820m Nkunga 30.08.95 6/30
Cucumis aculeatus 2000m Meru Rd N 28.01.96 71/96
Cynodon dactyloides 2180m Rumuiku 19.01.96 8/96
Euphorbia uligna 2180m Rumuiku 19.01.96 1/96
Heliconia stenodora 1820m Nkunga 30.08.95 12/30
Hibiscus canabicus 2180m Rumuiku 27.01.96 55/96
Hibiscus nianumbui 1820m Nkunga 22.01.96 28/96
Hydrocotyle rauenkoloides 1820m Nkunga 20.01.96 16/96
Laurobifera tetrandra 2180m Rumuiku 19.01.96 7/96
Lonicera chabrata 1820m Nkunga 30.08.95 19/30
Ludwigia obtusata 1820m Nkunga 01.09.95 16/1
Nymphopha nyanbali 2360m Sacred Lake 26.01.96 46/96
Oxalis ulvifolia 2360m Sacred Lake 26.01.96 41/96
Phyllanthus boerhaavi 2180m Rumuiku 08.09.95 10/8
Polygonum adnigrifolium 2360m Sacred Lake 26.01.96 37/96
Rumex acantharum 1820m Nkunga 03.09.95 5/6
Solanum incanum 1820m Nkunga 30.08.95 17/30
Solanum rencheri 1820m Nkunga 30.08.95 13/30
Tecoma ramosa 2180m Rumuiku 27.01.96 30/96
Urticaria australis 1820m Nkunga 02.09.95 5/2
Urticaria reflexa 2360m Sacred Lake 26.01.96 44/96
Veemonia bolivi 1820m Nkunga 03.09.95 17/1

Meet the staff, continued

Paul Matiku
Executive Director

Matiku has overall responsibility for the management of staff, effective and efficient implementation of Nature Kenya projects and programmes, advocating Nature Kenya's policies to other agencies and ensuring that Nature Kenya's strategic plan is implemented and objectives are attained.



Solomon Ngari
Conservation Programme Manager

Soloo's work involves establishing local support for site based conservation, evaluating and developing project proposals and liaising with Government and NGOs at local level.



Vincent Owuor
Administration Officer

Vincent handles the billing of projects, maintains office equipment, handles all travel arrangements and assists with banking.



William Tolo Olang'
Driver

Willy is responsible for driving and maintaining the vehicles.





It has been another extremely busy year for your Society. Indeed, there has been so much activity that it has been very difficult to find the time to pause and take stock. This could potentially be dangerous. As Conrad once put it, action consoles, being the enemy of thought and the friend of flattering illusions. So how far have we made progress this year, and how far allowed ourselves to be seduced by merely being busy?

I would like to try to answer this in reference to our Strategic Plan for 1999 to 2002—a plan where we are now nearing the half-way mark. Our strategy aims to ensure that Nature Kenya is established as a strong, independent, significant contributor to the conservation of important biodiversity in Kenya. To this end, we have designated a set of activities that should help us achieve seven major results (pages 26–31).

2000 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

90th Annual General Meeting of the East Africa Natural History Society

What of the wider picture? Our international links to TBA and Earthwatch remain vigorous. The 'other half' of the EANH, Nature Uganda, also continues to go from strength to strength. Their seven staff are now well settled into new headquarters on Tufnel Road, and busy preparing to host the Tenth Pan-African Ornithological Congress in September 2000. With over three hundred members and a strong programme of activities and conservation work, they are a branch to be proud of.

With Nature Uganda, we link to a network of BirdLife Partners and Representatives across Africa and the world. Three meetings in the last twelve months—the Council of the African Partnership meetings in Burkina Faso and in Tunisia, and the Global Partnership meeting in Malaysia in October 1999 – have provided great opportunities for learning from what others are doing.

This is a tremendous benefit that involvement with the BirdLife Partnership brings our Society, and not by any means narrowly limited to birds. We have been able to show others what we are doing, too: for instance, site conservation officers from Ethiopia (Ethiopian Wildlife and Natural History Society), Tanzania (Wildlife Conservation Society of Tanzania) and Nature Uganda visited our Important Bird Areas Site Support Groups in 1999, and in February 2000 we were able to facilitate a workshop on IBA priorities in Ethiopia.

The contributions made by some of our members and staff are being recognised by the outside world, too. We were delighted that Fleur Ngweni, our Honorary Secretary, was awarded the prestigious Royal Society for the Protection of Birds Conservation Medal in 1999. More recently, Paul Matiku, our Network and Advocacy Manager, was presented with the East African Environmental Network Conservation Award. Congratulations to them both.

I have left out many, many details—and I apologise to all those whose work has not been mentioned—but you will see that your Society has indeed accomplished a great deal over the last year. We believe we are making haste slowly—trying to build a base for our work that will be sustainable into the future. Thanks to your support and involvement as

members, progress is being made. However, there is no cause for complacency. Daunting challenges remain, and there is ever more pressing conservation work to be done. Despite our emphasis on sustainability, we are in many ways racing against time—and, as the great Dr Johnson put it, he that runs against Time has an antagonist not subject to casualties. If we are to succeed, it can only be through an effort that involves the moral and tangible support of all our members. Together, we are starting to make a difference: by staying involved, and persuading others to become involved too, you can make sure that we continue to do so.





Fieldwork training calls for hands-on education

Our membership does not, yet, quite approximate to the 'general public', but the activities under this results are those that members are probably most aware of. There certainly seems to be progress here. World Environment Day last June was celebrated with great success by all of our Important Birds Areas (IBA) Site Support Groups, with substantial media coverage (especially on radio). A series of radio programmes on IBA conservation was also broadcast by KBC. FONAs Wind in the Trees was held successfully once again. World Birdwatch in October 1999 involved more than three hundred birders and an even larger number of schoolchildren. Membership was up to close to 1,200 members by the end of 1999, not including several hundred registered with Nature Uganda.

The situation with our publications is improving (though not completely satisfactory). Nevertheless the *Bulletin* has been appearing more regularly; a double issue of *Kenya Birds* was published last year and another is now ready to go to press, and the *Journal* is

1. 'General public's understanding of biodiversity improved'

well on track to recovering lost ground. The Executive has considered and approved recommendations from the Editors concerning the format and content of publications, and we expect further advances in the coming year. The Bird Committee will be underwriting distribution of *Kenya Birds* to all members, while the *Bulletin* will shrink to the same format. Excellent papers are streaming in for the *Journal* and a major special issue on the Eastern Arc mountains is about to go to press. Special thanks for that date go to our Honorary Editor, Lorna Dewar.

Our regular public events—the Wednesday morning birdwalks, part-day outings, tree walks and lectures—as well as interest-group activities (such as Succulents' monthly get-togethers) and this field outings are all going strong. Both in the variety of events on offer (including adventurous excursions to places such as Lake Turkana) and the level of participation this has been a very good year indeed! However, we are still lagging behind with activating regional members' groups and with meeting our target of 2000 members by the end of 2000.

2. 'Biodiversity priorities identified and documented'

Peter H. Kleny and Egidio

A major step forward was the publication—at last—of the Important Bird Areas directory for Kenya, which was launched with some fanfare at the end of April 2000. Several hundred copies are being distributed to key institutions, and there are indications that it is having an impact. It was pleasing to hear, for instance, that the Ramsar Convention Secretariat has already used it to encourage the Kenya Government to designate additional Ramsar sites. Setting up a monitoring system for the IBAs is an important part of our strategy, and much headway was made towards this at a workshop we held in November 1999, involving a wide range of interested parties (or what are fashionably called 'stakeholders'). This meeting agreed on monitoring guidelines and protocols for actually doing the work in different habitats. In May 1999, we trained members of the Friends of Karungu Plateau in surveying and monitoring grasslands; forest protocols are being tried out in Arabuko-Sekoke by the garden association, under Colin Jackson's supervision; and the coastal wetland counts continue, at a record number of sites this year. Simple guidelines for



how to send in general information on IBAs have also been finalised, and are being circulated to members. In the meantime, much information has been gathered for both the paper and computer IBA databases, and members are encouraged to make use of this resource. A challenge now is to identify important sites for those organisms that don't have feathers. The IBA network will already take care of many of these, but there are bound to be gaps. Committees for mammals, insects and plants are in the stages of recruitment, consolidation and conception, respectively. The hope of course is that these new Committees will soon become as well established as the one for birds, and bring together active groups of enthusiasts who can deal with other taxa.

3. 'Nature Kenya's views and position on biodiversity priorities recognised and respected by decision-makers and the general public'

I have mentioned the general public; how about the decision-makers? Our philosophy could be summed up as *gotta sweat before it rains*: dripping water hollows out a stone. Those involved in Society advocacy may not much appreciate being likened to drops, but that's the way it works: by putting forward our case steadily, objectively and, most of all, persistently, eventually we make an impact. This effect is difficult to measure, but we have undoubtedly gained a lot of ground this year. Nature Kenya has made substantial input to the Environment Co-ordination and Management Act, which became law earlier this year, to the forthcoming Forests Bill, and to the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan.

In July 1999 we held a major seminar and workshop to inform Kenyans about the African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement (AEWA). This created considerable awareness about waterbirds, wetlands and the Convention on Migratory Species that provides the framework for AEWA. The meeting was undoubtedly a major stimulus for Kenya's accession, which has been agreed by Cabinet.

We also had the unusual chance of sending delegations to two other big international meetings, the Conference of Parties for Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species and the Convention on Biological Diversity, both held in Nairobi in 2000. These proved a valuable learning experience as well as an excellent chance to develop both local and international contacts. At CBIT the joint Nature Kenya-BirdLife International stand was very attractively laid out and visited by a large number of delegates. We also produced a set of five Nature Kenya-BirdLife postcards on threatened birds that were given free to all delegates and very well received; and we helped to organise a successful side-event on the IBA programme.

The Important Bird Areas National Liaison Committee remains a key body for networking and advocacy concerning IBA. Conservation Attendance at NLC meetings has been excellent over the past year, and we are delighted with the active involvement of many representatives.

All this advocacy work is very time consuming, and we are lucky to have a number of members who have the interest and the know-how to involve themselves. It is, though, paying substantial dividends in raising and improving our profile and credibility, and ensuring that our views are actually taken into account. These dividends should increase still further in future.

4. 'Specifying and initiating action for the protection of key species, sites and habitats'

Here, for the moment, we are working primarily with the Important Bird Areas Site Support Groups. This work was made substantially easier once the Landrover had arrived through the GEF/UNDP IBA Project in February 2000. It is impossible to list, even to outline, all that has happened at sites over the past year. However, highlights include the successful completion of the RSPB-funded Kinangop Grasslands IBA project. This built substantial capacity within the Friends of Kinangop Plateau group, which is now independently running its own office and its own conservation and educational campaigns. A series of public meetings organised by PKP greatly improved understanding of the conservation problems on the plateau, and membership is growing fast. A final output of the project is a striking poster about Sharpe's Longclaw, the flagship grassland species—these can be purchased from the office. In Kakamega Forest, meanwhile, two co-operating SSGs are about to start implementing an eco-tourism and education project, funded by GEF/UNDP Small Grants, for which Nature Kenya will provide backstopping along with the National Museums of Kenya. The Kijabe Environment Volunteers (KENVO), an SSG for the Kikuyu Escarpment Forest, has also just been awarded a prestigious

BP Conservation Award to undertake a detailed assessment of the level and sustainability of people's use of the Kerita Forest (a section of the IBA). Much has been done to strengthen all the SSGs this year, including training in management and group leadership and a special course on 'Fundamentals of Ornithology for Site Support Groups'. These groups contain very active and committed individuals and we are pleased to be able to work with them to achieve real conservation action on the ground.

Not all conservation action has been at IBAs. The succulent garden within the new Nairobi Botanic Garden represents an excellent facility for *ex-situ* conservation, as well as education. The garden was planted entirely by Succulentia volunteers, working with the Botanic Garden team at the National Museums of Kenya—another excellent example of conservation co-operation. I understand that it is thriving.

Looking to the future, I am especially pleased to tell you about HARI. This is a recently constituted group whose full name is the Habitat Restoration Initiative for Eastern Africa. It is made up of a wide range of people with expertise in restoration ecology, and now a Committee of the Society. Habitat restoration is a major issue at many IBAs and other sites, and we look forward to HARI starting to get its teeth into some projects on the ground.

5. *'Nature
Kenya
membership
increased and
broadened'*



Attending to a visitor at the front office

6. *'Funding
increased
from
diversified
sources'*

Increased—yes, though we still need to do much better, and are puzzled why many people seem to have forgotten to renew their subs in 2000. (Forgetfulness, rather than reluctance, seems to be the issue—we will have to send more effective reminders in future.) Our membership package is probably better value than ever before, so there is no good reason why we can't meet our target of 2000 members by the end of the year—if we ALL go out, full steam ahead, to recruit! I have said it before and no doubt I will say it again, but it would be a tremendous help if everyone would try just to recruit another member before the end of the year. Please!

Our membership includes a great diversity of people, and in particular many more young people (not just students) than in the past—but we are still concerned to find out how best to attract and retain younger members. A youth workshop held at Egerton University earlier in the year produced some interesting recommendations and we shall be looking at how best to put these into effect.

There is real concern that we are so busy trying to do other things that fund-raising is not being given enough attention. A Development Subcommittee has been constituted and produced many useful ideas—but no one seems to have time to put them properly into action. We urgently need to identify more skilled people among the membership who can volunteer a little time. If there is anyone out there who would be interested—please get in touch!

We have been trying, nonetheless. Together with the RSPB, we have put together a substantial and I think well thought-out proposal to the UK National Lottery Charities Fund. If supported, this would allow us to expand and strengthen our network of IBA Site Support Groups, and greatly improve our education programme. The proposal took a great deal of time and effort to prepare and is a very hefty document (though it works out at only about one page per thousand pounds of support requested, which seems reasonable). We will know in mid-2000 whether or not we have been successful.

7. 'Effectiveness and efficiency of Nature Kenya management and administration enhanced'

The Management Sub-committee has spent a great deal of time this year working through detailed procedures and decisions concerning the management of personnel, vehicles, equipment, finances and fieldwork, *inter alia*. I would like to thank the other MSc members, especially Fleur Ng'weno, Benny Bytebier and Tom Butynski. Their input of time and wise advice has been of great benefit to the Society.

Our staff continue to work with enormous dedication, many going far beyond the call of duty to make sure that tasks are completed and deadlines met on time. We are lucky to have such committed individuals working for us, and I am sure that you will join me in thanking them for their efforts.

The same thanks should go to the many volunteers whom we rely on to keep

Nature Kenya is not just ticking over but moving forward: these range from Executive Committee members to the many (often youthful) naturalists who help out in various ways in the office. Despite the great growth in staff numbers, our volunteer ethic remains alive and well – which is an excellent thing, since our operations would grind to a complete halt without them.

We welcomed two new staff this year: Daniel Akatch, who has the key task of looking after our accounts, and Lawrence Maina, who will be assisting in the Tropical Biology Association programme. Sadly, we also said goodbye, to our Executive Officer Shriti Rajani, who is leaving for personal reasons. As anyone who has met her will realise, Shriti's contribution to the Society over the last two-and-a-half years has been immense. Whatever progress we have made in that time owes a great deal to her efforts, and her departure will inevitably leave a major gap. She will be much missed, and I am sure I speak on behalf of you all when I say how greatly we appreciate her efforts.



Training on the Fundamentals of Ornithology Course

Nature Kenya

Supporting **Sponsor members**

Alan Dixon	Mary K. Minot
Alison Wilkinson	Moffat Mwangi
Andrew Duncan	Muchane Gichuru
Benny Bytebier	Neil Willsher
Christopher Everard	Norman Searle
Christopher Thouless	Onesmas Kahindi
Esmond Martin	Philip Hechle
George McKnight	Quentin McConnell
J. H. E. Leakey	Rafiki Africa
Jane Barnley	Richard Leakey
Jayant Ruparel	Seeta Ruparel
Joan Root	Sulyn Talbot
John Fox	Sunny Bindra
Jonathan Moss	Susan Giddings
Leo Niskanen	T.B. Muckle
Leonard K. Wood	Terry Stevenson
Leonard Okeya	Tom Butynski
Mark Mallalieu	Truman Young

Major Donors

Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
 Global Environment Facility/ UNDP
 GEF/UNDP Small Grants (Kakamega Forest IBA)
 European Union (Arabuko-Sokoke Forest IBA)
 Swedish International Development Agency
 African Bird Club (Kakamega Forest IBA)
 Club 300 Foundation for Bird Protection (Mukurwe-ini Valley IBA)
 People's Trust for Endangered Species (Lake Naivasha IBA)
 Whitley Awards Foundation (Biodiversity Parks Project)

The **EANHS Bulletin** is a printed magazine issued twice yearly, which exists for the rapid publication of short notes, articles, letters, and reviews.

Contributions may be in clear handwriting, printed or on disk. Photographs and line drawings are most welcome. E-mail attached files or short texts in e-mail messages are also welcome.

Please send to the Nature Kenya office at the following address:

Nature Kenya
P. O. Box 44486
00100 Nairobi GPO
KENYA

or office@naturekenya.org

Other Society Publications

The *Journal of East Africa Natural History* is published twice yearly, in collaboration with the National Museums of Kenya. Contributions must follow the style directed in the Notice to Contributors found in the back of every issue of the JEANH and should be sent to the Nature Kenya office at the address above.

Scopus is the publication of the Bird Committee of the EANHS. All correspondence should be sent to the Nature Kenya office at the address above.

Kenya Birds is also a publication of the Bird Committee, in conjunction with the Ornithology Department of the National Museums of Kenya. Published twice yearly it contains popular and informative articles on birds and birding in Kenya. Correspondence should be sent to the Editor, Dr Leon Bennun at the Nature Kenya address or by e-mail leon@africaonline.co.ke.

Other publications include:

Upland Kenya Wild Flowers and Important Bird Areas of Kenya

These can be purchased, in Kenya, from the Nature Kenya office or internationally from the Natural History Book Service, 2-3 Wills Road, Totnes, Devon TQ9 5XN, United Kingdom, e-mail nhbs@nhbs.co.uk

For more information about our publications you can go to our web site **www.naturekenya.org**

or you can reach the office on phone 254 (2) 749957 / 746090 or fax: 254 (2) 741049

Front cover: Members on a trip to Marich Pass

Contents

Life All Around Us <i>by Fleur Ng'weno</i>	1
FLATWORMS, Platyhelminthes simple animals that wriggle inside us	
Meet the NATURE KENYA staff	6, 20, 23
L. Turkana <i>by Jane Bwye</i>	7
Members field trip to KOObI FORA	
Short Communications	
An exceptional roost of CATTLE EGRETS in Kampala <i>by William Banage & Derek Pomeroy</i>	11
Urban Wildlife	
Nairobi Garden Natural History Observations, The Records of ARTURO FORESTI <i>Edited by L. E. Newton</i>	12
HARVESTING TERMITES AND ANTS <i>by Jo Darlington</i>	16
New and Interesting Records	
GRASSES AND SEDGES IN KENYA <i>by ADQ Agnew & Mathiew Wooller</i>	19
PLANTS FROM MT. KENYA, CHOGORIA TRACK <i>by Andrew Agnew, Stephen Mathai & David Swain</i>	21
2000 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 90th Annual General Meeting of the East Africa Natural History Society	24

Editor

Lorna Depew

Layout and design

Catherine Ngarachu

NatureKenya



BirdLife
INTERNATIONAL